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# **PROBLEMS IN THE DEFINITION AND MEASUREMENT OF DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT**

Work submitted in support of an Application for the Award of the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) on the Basis of Published  
Works, Middlesex University, by

Robert B. Sutcliffe

Ajangiz, May 1995

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### **Acknowledgements and apologies**

I am very grateful to Damaris García, Mariví Lamas and Carlos Ascunce for their help in the preparation of this collection.

The first of these articles was published when photocopiers were rare and personal computers unheard of. Now the preparation of these articles and chapters in this form would have been impossible without these technologies. But, as every teacher knows, these technologies are indispensable but always let you down when you most need them. I am afraid that to give a minimum of homogeneity to this presentation in three copies it has been necessary to resort at times to photocopies of photocopies. The quality of some of the reproduction is as a result often much inferior to what I would like. I hope that it will not cause too many problems for the eyesight of the examiners. Chapter 9 appears exactly as published but has been reformatted for this purpose.

## **Introduction (May 1995)**

*[This introduction is a response to the invitation to supply, along with the publications on which my application is based “an additional, expanded, discussion, not exceeding 5000 words (in English) of the contribution of the submitted works to the general advancement of knowledge of the field/fields of study”.]*

## I

The question of development has been one of the major concerns of modern social science. It followed from an interest in progress, especially moral and scientific progress, which can be traced back to the Renaissance or before and which received a great boost from the Enlightenment. Adam Smith introduced a new concern with economic (especially commercial and industrial) progress; and Hegel and later Marx and many others developed his ideas into stage theories of human history in which the economic was entwined with the social and political. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries many scholars looked back on a century of unprecedented economic change following an industrial revolution to which the label “development” began to be attached. Since then social theorists and economists have since made increasingly frequent attempts to define it and account for it.

From the First World War until after the end of the Second, European thinking, at least, was temporarily more concerned with crisis and stability than with growth and development. In parts of the Third World, however, especially in Latin America, some home-spun ideas about development and how to promote it began to emerge. With Asian and African decolonization and the growth of international organizations, the



idea of development was finally universalized. According to the predominant view of the question, countries were seen as either already developed or “developing”, implying that some day all countries would be developed. A critical view saw “developing” as no more than a cynical euphemism to cover up the fact that the poor countries were really being “underdeveloped”, a condition which had a tendency to persist rather than to be eliminated. Unity, however, existed around the axiomatic notion that people would be better off if the countries they lived in were developed. The idea of development, however, has gradually become a more problematic one and the unity in its favour shows signs of breaking down.

Different ideas about development were necessarily accompanied by attempts to measure the level of development which a country had achieved and to see whether it was advancing towards the goal or not, and at what speed. So the epoch of development has also been one of growing interest in international statistical comparisons.

## II

The essays and chapters submitted here are concerned with the relation between ideas about development and ways of measuring it. They do not have the monographic consistency of a Ph.D. thesis since they were written over a period of 30 years. But I believe that they represent a set of pertinent and relatively consistent interventions in important debates, most of which are continuing. The questions with which they are concerned are relatively constant; the answers less so. This partly reflects reconsideration on the part of the author, and partly the exploration of new paths which have been opened up in the course of the debate during the period covered by the submitted pieces.

The methodology used is a consistent one. Most of the pieces are primarily theoretical and lie within the broad field of political economy. Empirical material is frequently used to back up or form the background to primarily theoretical arguments. The author has not collected primary data but used existing data from a wide range of sources. Such originality as the method possesses comes from the way in which the data are processed, analyzed and presented. In contemporary economics this method is a threatened species, though it is still not extinct. It survives better in economic history than economics and it should be clear from these pieces that some of my principal influences have been economic historians. I am strongly of the view that this kind of interplay between theory and critically assessed empirical material, without much use of econometric methodology, remains a powerful and important method.

Most of these chapters are interventions in debates in which the opposing arguments have usually been very polarized. Such polarization has virtues and drawbacks. Few arguments find their rightful place unless at some time they are advocated with some extremism. And some examples of extremism will be found here. But more often I have opposed the excessive polarization of arguments, and accepted parts of apparently very different positions. This partly arises from the fact that many of these essays had as much a divulgative purpose as an analytical or polemical one. Those essays which are most partisan still attempt to produce a more rigorous (which often means less extreme) version of the arguments which they support. The general result of this is not, I hope, theoretical moderation but rather what I would like to call positive theoretical eclecticism. Eclecticism, however, has been for me a slowly acquired taste.

A particular aspect of this eclecticism has been an attempt to bridge

some of the gap between marxist and non-marxist discussions of these questions. Marxism remains an important influence for me but I am always distressed by the anti-empirical nature of much marxist writing. And I am increasingly convinced that the marxist approach is more potent in its less dogmatic than its more dogmatic forms.

Bill Warren did us all a favour in focussing attention on the marxism of Marx. I think he erred, however, in making Marx much more single-minded than he really was. Recent reading of parts of Marx's writings hitherto unknown to me, has led me to the conclusion that Marx did not have only one view on the relationship between world capitalism and the underdeveloped countries. He had at least three: that which stresses the positive side of capitalist expansion, which Bill Warren singled out and which is illustrated largely by examples from India<sup>1</sup>; another which resembles much more dependency theory which is largely illustrated with examples from Ireland<sup>2</sup>; and a third which has something in common with the recent alternative, even anti-development thinking, which refers in practice mainly to Russia<sup>3</sup>. Whether these fragments are part of a unified structure or whether they represent Marx changing his mind is an interesting and open question.

<sup>1</sup> See Bill Warren, *Imperialism, Pioneer of Capitalism*, London: New Left Books, 1980 and V.G.Kiernan, 'Marx and India' in *Marxism and Imperialism*,

<sup>2</sup> Jie-Hyun Lim, 'Marx's theory of imperialism and the national question', *Science and Society*, Vol 56, No 2, Summer 1992

<sup>3</sup> See Teodor Shanin (ed), *Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and the 'peripheries of capitalism'*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983

### III

Chapters 1 - 4 hinge on the issue of industrialization. Chapter 1 attempted to introduce some debates in economic history into a famous polemic in development economics. Chapter 2 contributed a systematic comparison of the voluminous writings on patterns of industrial development, a novel way of comparing levels of industrialization which was later used by others in further research and an exhaustive discussion of arguments for and against industrialization. The final chapter of the book also tries to integrate hypotheses about economic history (especially those of Alexander Gerschenkron) with the then developing theory of dependency. This theme is further developed in Chapter 3, especially in relation to classic marxist writings.

All these chapters share a number of assumptions common in development studies at the time they were written (see 10.5-10.6). These are that the nature of development is broadly speaking equivalent to what happened in developed countries to bring them to their present state and that, therefore, the history of Europe, Japan, the USA and the USSR (at that time commonly regarded as a developed country) is of great relevance to the quest for development today. They also for the most part make the assumption that development is close to being synonymous with industrialization, although Chapter 2 makes some important reservations about that (2.64-2.106).

Both the final part of Chapter 2 (2.107-2.134) and Chapter 3 paid special attention the question of the historical and international context of the development process in developing countries. Both of them argue, though with less extremism than was often the case in the general dependency camp with which I identified, that by and large the international economic environment is an obstacle to further examples of

national development, at least of a capitalist kind, and that some form of isolation or protection from that environment is necessary to development. Chapter 3 (3.4-3.7) tries to spell out in detail the necessary conditions for a successful independent industrialization, the possibility of which was part of the debate.

These general ideas have subsequently come under attack, especially from three quarters: from a number of Marxists, starting with the writing of Bill Warren; from the neo-liberalism which has come to dominate orthodox development economics; and, more recently, from a more amorphous collection of critics of development associated with the so-called new social movements and alternative currents within the social sciences. In the period since writing Chapters 1 - 3 these three currents of thinking (especially the first and the last) have obliged me in different ways to rethink what I then argued, to change it considerably, yet not to abandon it entirely. Chapters 4 - 10 reflect this process of rethinking. Chapter 5 is the most extensive statement of my reasons for coming to think that some of my earlier conclusions and assumptions needed to be reexamined. The main one of these is that, along with many other participants on all sides in the debates in which I had been engaged, too little attention was given to the situation of individuals and communities in the process of development, and too much to the national economic aspects of the process.

#### IV

Chapters 6 and 7 return to some of the arguments of the earlier Chapters but with a different focus. They are primarily attempts made in the mid-to late-1980s to describe and assess empirical developments in developing countries in the preceding two decades. I maintain in Chapter

7 that events relating to development after the late-1970s, the heyday of the debate between dependency and its critics, have been inherently surprising to both sides. Predictions of the future of development made 20 years ago from different vantage points in the development debate turned out to be very far from what actually happened. Both sides in an over-polarized debate had written too much as if they expected experiences in different parts of the world to be relatively homogeneous and relatively long lasting. Yet, if we want to find a characteristic of the 'third world' as a single entity in the last 20 years, it would surely have to be its heterogeneity and polarization—another way, perhaps, of saying that the third world is *not* a single entity. Countries do not range themselves around an average which even approximately corresponds to what either side was expecting. These surprises were partly the outcome of the dramatic and general unpredicted events of the early 1970s which gave rise to a major crisis of the world economy and which had a profound influence on the polarization of economic experience in the poorer countries.

Three of the important events which define this unexpected and polarized outcome are the development successes of East Asia, the debt crisis and its aftermath in Latin America and the alarming economic

Korea's development does not fit neatly into any of the paradigms discussed in the development debates of the 1960s and 1970s and its causes are still a very open question.

Chapter 7 insists on the significance of this development and on the fact that it cannot be relegated to the status of an exception. I have not made any detailed study of the Korean case but it does seem to me that it confirms in part the usefulness of the list of conditions for successful independent industrialization outlined in Chapter 3 (3.4-3.7). These have been much criticized as being too demanding<sup>4</sup>, but they are in fact remarkably close to the account now most frequently given of the reasons for Korea's success<sup>5</sup> (a home market, a balanced industrial structure, a relatively equal income distribution, a strong accumulating class assisted by the state, home grown technological development and little foreign capital).

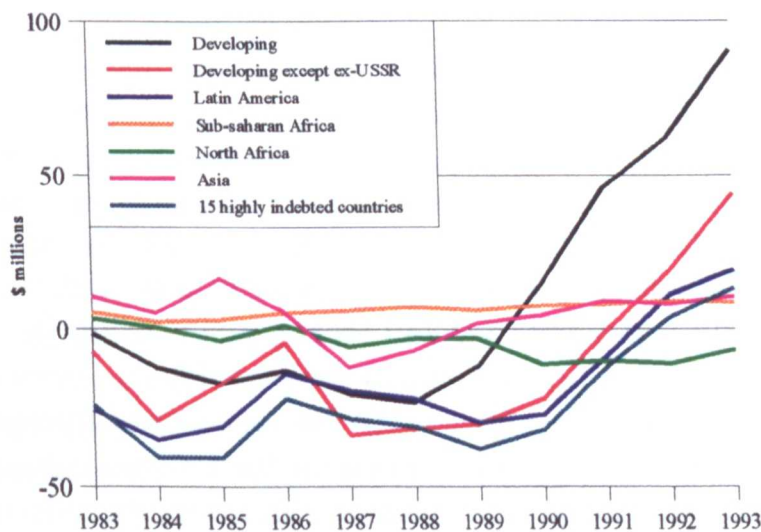
The recent experience of Latin America has been equally unexpected but in a different way; the surprise dates more or less from the debt crisis which began in 1982 and whose effects have been profound in almost all countries of the continent. There followed the infamous 'lost decade' in which very many social and economic indicators in most Latin American countries worsened. In one sense this conforms to what dependency theory would have predicted, the transfer of value from Latin America to the rich, creditor countries. Chapter 7, however, stresses that this exceptionally large transfer of resources which lasted from 1983 to 1990 (see Figure 1), was due to very different structures

<sup>4</sup> For instance by Bill Warren, 'Imperialism and capitalist industrialization', *New Left Review*, 81, September/October 1973 and Anthony Brewer, *Marxist theories of imperialism*, pp. 273-6

<sup>5</sup> For instance, by Alice Amsden, *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and late industrialization*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989

than those which structuralist and dependency theorists had emphasized. The big transformation, of course, is that the basis of claims on the production of Latin American countries shifted from trade and investment (the activities of the multinationals in the language of dependency theorists) to finance (the banks, the IMF and the creditor governments) whose previous role had been very marginal.

Figure 1: Transfers associated with the debt, 1983-1993



Source: World Bank, *World Debt Tables*, 1994-95

It is the economic indicators for Africa which in the last 20 years show the worst record. For the continent as a whole national income per head has changed little over that period and many other indicators show worsening trends. The data up to the mid-1980s is summarized in Chapter 6. It has not improved overall in the decade since then.



Chapter 7 attempts to give an overall picture of these very divergent experiences in the international economic experiences of third world countries, under the headings of trade, direct investment, debt, aid and migration. While its form of analysis still contains echoes of the dependency school it insists on a number of differences. It emphasizes the enormous polarization in economic experience, in no way regarding the successes as some sort of exception to a rule. And it shows how debt became much more important than foreign investment in determining international flows of resources.

The danger with the methods used in these articles is that their conclusions rely on national economic statistics which may to be unreliable and misleading because they average very diverse experiences within a nation. They may lead to the 'exaggerate pessimism' of which John Sender and Sheila Smith have rightly complained<sup>6</sup>. This is truer of Chapter 6 than of Chapter 7. This may have something to do with the fact that between writing these two pieces I spent a year teaching in Nicaragua. That experience brought home to me how little of a story can to be revealed by macroeconomic figures. No macroeconomic figures could to be worse than those for Nicaragua during the 1980s: a constant 3 percent annual reduction in the GDP, galloping inflation, the reduction of the real wage in the formal sector by over 98%. Yet even in 1987, while everyone was short of everything one did not see people in the state of total poverty which is such a common sight in New York, London or Madrid. The resilience of societies to economic crisis and decline is composed of many factors. In Nicaragua those which were crucial were the relative equality of income distribution, the relative

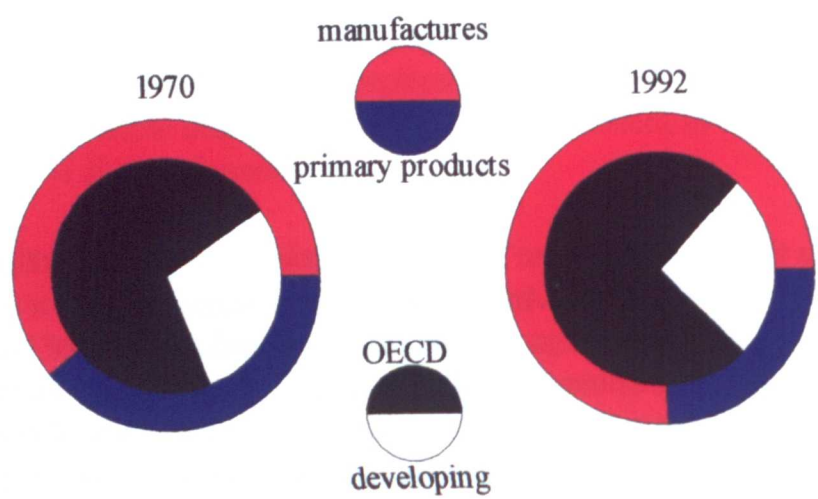
<sup>6</sup> John Sender and Sheila Smith, 'What's right with the Berg Report and what's left of its criticisms', in Peter Lawrence (ed), *World Recession and the Food Crisis in Africa*, London: James Currey, 1986

strength of personal, group and political social support mechanisms and perhaps more than anything else the remittances of money by emigrants. In Africa it appears that the main difference between countries which have suffered major worsening in human and social indicators and those which have not is not the difference in the rate of growth or decline of the GDP but the presence or absence of wars.

## V

One of the themes of Chapter 7 is the rapidly changing structure of world trade, with a fast growing manufactures component and a stagnant or declining primary products component. A significant part of the polarization between countries has been associated with this. The trends continue and can to be brought up to date with the aid of a few graphs. Figures 2 - 5 show a pronounced industrialization of commodity trade both for the world (2) and for very many countries (3), but scarcely at all for Africa, a polarization of shares of world trade between different groups of countries (4) and the extreme concentration of the new manufactured exports in a few countries (5).

**Figure 2: The commodity and country composition of exports, 1970 and 1992**

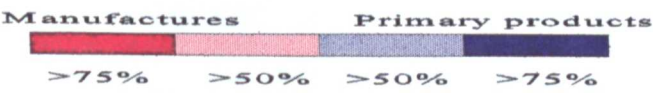
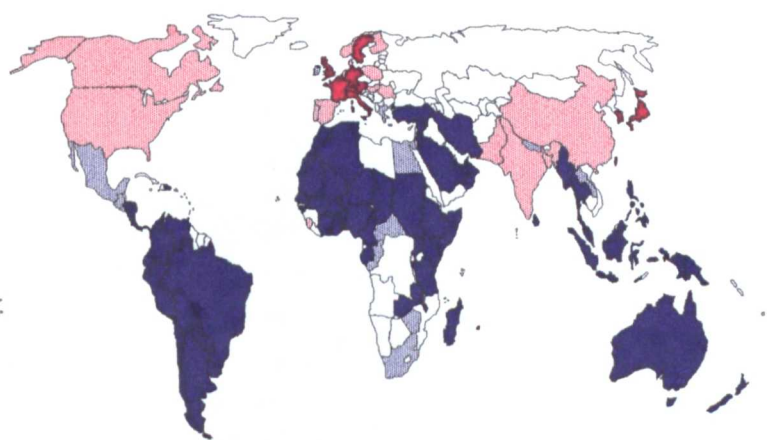


Source of data: World Bank, *World Development Report 1994*

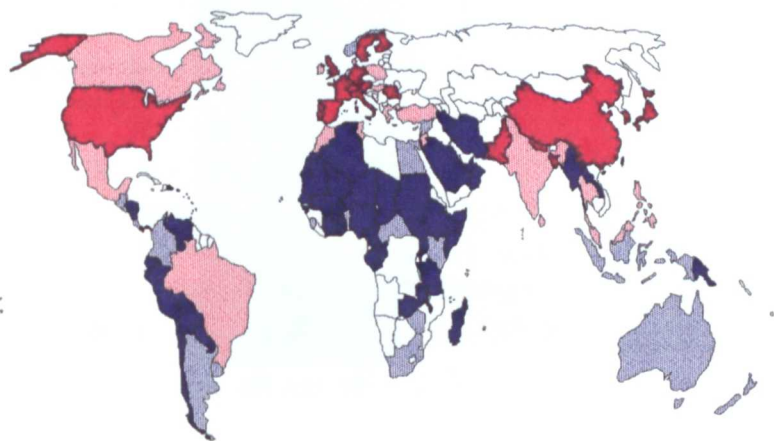
The outer circles show the commodity composition of trade between manufactures (red) and primary products (blue) while the inner circles show its country composition between the OECD (black) and developing countries (white). The circles are angled so that the composition for each country group can to be easily seen along the border between the two circles.

Figure 3: The commodity composition of trade, 1970 and 1992

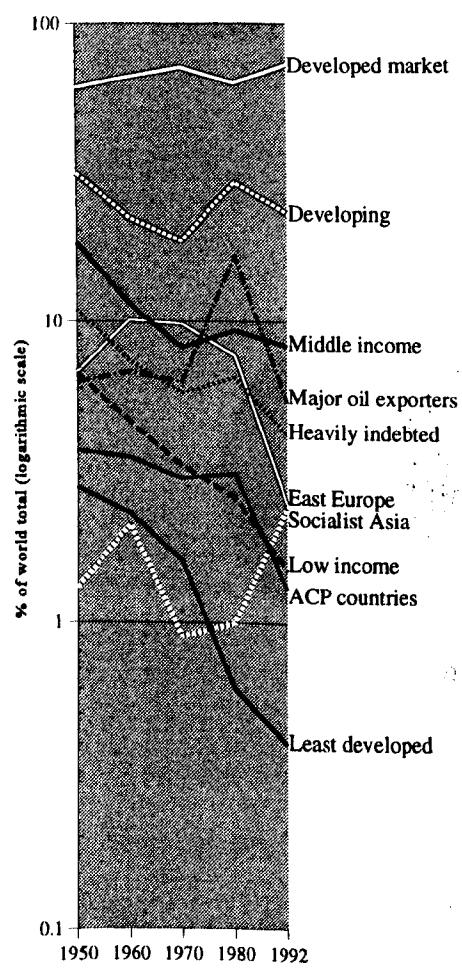
1970



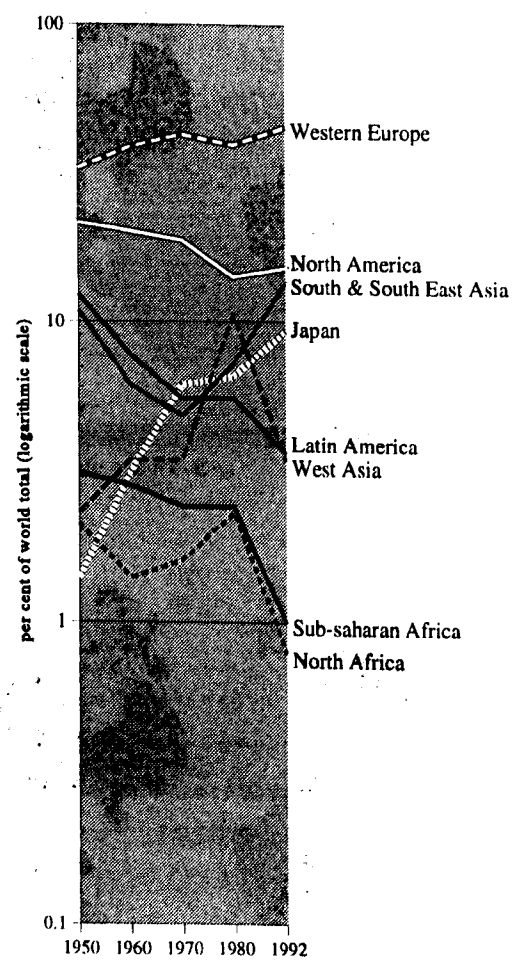
1992



Source of data: World Bank, *World Development Report 1994*

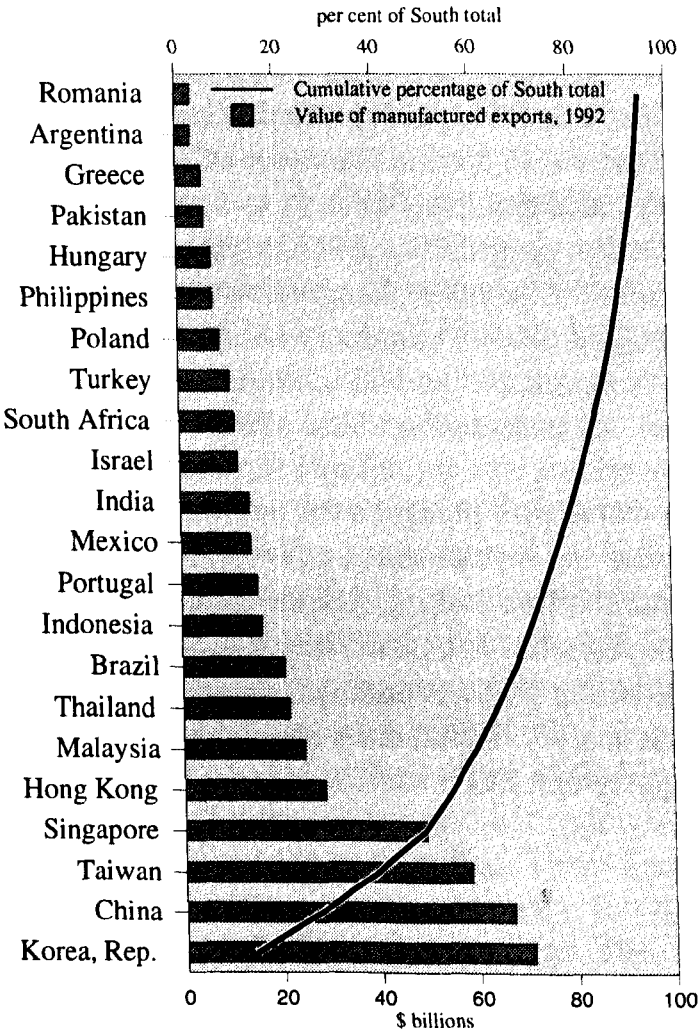


**Figure 4: Shares of world exports, 1950-1990 by country groups**



Source of data: UNCTAD, *Handbook of International Trade Statistics*, 1994

**Figure 5: The concentration of developing country manufactured exports, 1992**



Source of data: World Bank, *World Development Report 1994*

The foregoing graphs show at a glance how countries which have caught the upward current of world markets for manufactures have prospered while those which have not have in many cases suffered immiserizing consequences and these countries, as the maps make clear, are largely in Africa. Maizels' recently updated conclusions about the vast terms of trade losses of African exporters during the 1980s and 1990s give an idea of the burden of this trade pattern<sup>7</sup>. In this sense an aspect of the involvement with the world market is a cause of immiserization, as the old dependency theory predicted. But, these facts do not support the often implied conclusion that progress would be faster given more isolation from the world market. Chapter 7, using a nowadays not very fashionable vocabulary, finds it necessary to add the question of marginalization to exploitation and domination as problems of the position of African countries in the world economy. Paraphrasing Marx on the subject of workers, it is argued that for underdeveloped countries there is one thing worse than being drawn into the capitalist world market through trade and investment, that is NOT being drawn into the capitalist world market. It is striking that the impoverishment of African countries in recent years has coincided with their growing marginalization from the world economy. Africa's share of world trade and investment has sharply declined. Its dependence on aid, especially short term, emergency aid, has risen.

<sup>7</sup> Alfred Maizels, *Commodities in Crisis*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993 and Alfred Maizels, 'The continuing commodity crisis of developing countries', *World Development*, vol 22, No.11, 1994

## VI

All debates about meanings in social science must have a subplot to do with measurement. A major part of Chapter 2 was concerned with finding some satisfactory empirical measure of the concept of industrialization. The three gateway definition of industrialization which is developed there was designed to get away from oversimplified empirical statements. It was in a tradition of interest in the structure of economies between major sectors (both in product and output) which has, in the development field at least, been largely superseded. The measure is related to the definitions of independent industrialization, already discussed, has been found useful by some later writers and in particular was developed graphically in a most ingenious way by the authors of the Open University *Atlas of Economic Development*<sup>8</sup>.

It is not possible here to repeat the update of the statistics which I attempted in Chapter 5 (5.5-5.9). A cursory look at the figures, however, shows that the same trends continue. A growing number of countries pass the first two gateways. But still very few pass the third gateway, thus supporting the notion that modern economic growth in many developing countries fails to spread its effects into large parts of the population. But according to the highest of the available estimates, China would now pass all three tests. The other conclusion of the update in Chapter 5 may now have to be modified. There I suggest that in contemporary industrializations, structural change was running 'precociously' ahead of productivity development. The productivity measures, however, were based on estimates of value added converted to dollars at exchange rates. One of the most important developments in development-related data in the last 3 or 4 years is the rapidly growing

<sup>8</sup> Ben Crow and others, *Third World Atlas*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1983



availability of macroeconomic indicators calculated at purchasing power parity, the result of the International Comparisons Project. Since those figures tend to raise the value of production and income in the poorer countries they tend to reduce the previously observed difference between levels of industrial productivity between rich and poor countries. In 1978 the calculated ratio between UK and Korean industrial productivity was 4.3:1 (see 5.7). A combination of Korea's growth, the UK's stagnation and the use of ppp estimates had reduced that ratio by 1991 to 1.6:1<sup>9</sup>. On present trends Korea's industrial output per head will surpass that of the UK well before the end of the century.

A small diversion on the significance of the ppp figures is in order since their use is also an important part of the development of the Human Development Index (commented on in Chapter 9) and since I have been making a separate study of these figures with a view to deciding what is gained and lost by using them as opposed to the still more easily available exchange rate converted figures.

Their development emerges from a critique of the concept of GDP/GNP. The number of different critiques of this concept from the point of view of development is long:

- it is a national average and makes no allowances for distribution
- it undervalues non-marketed goods and services; this, among other things devalues the contribution made by women to welfare
- it values all goods and services included equally, regardless of their moral or qualitative nature
- it fails to account for contamination and the depletion of natural wealth and even double values pollution when resources are

<sup>9</sup> Calculated from data in World Resources Institute, *World Resources 1994-5*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, Tables 15.1 and 16.1

devoted to clearing it up (see 10.10-10.11)

- it converts national values to a common currency by means of the exchange rate but there may be artificial unrealistic official exchange rates or multiple rates
- it converts at national exchange rates which may change and which may fail to reflect real price differences

The creating of ppp estimates of national income and product is a response only to the last of those criticisms, so it would be wrong to see it as rehabilitating the concept in general as a measure of development or welfare. Nonetheless, it does represent in principle an improvement. In practice, it is more difficult to decide. In the first place there are several estimates available of ppp national income figures and, even when they come from the same source, they give very different results<sup>10</sup>. The reason for such discrepancies may be that insufficient resources are devoted to the investigation of price levels, especially in poor countries. It is probable that the estimates for many countries are made using very little direct information and a lot of inference and short-cuts (for instance assuming that there are systematic similarities in price deviations between particular groups of countries).

<sup>10</sup> For instance those in the World Bank's *World Development Report 1994* and in its *Atlas 1995*.

Figure 6: How ppp changes the range of income per head

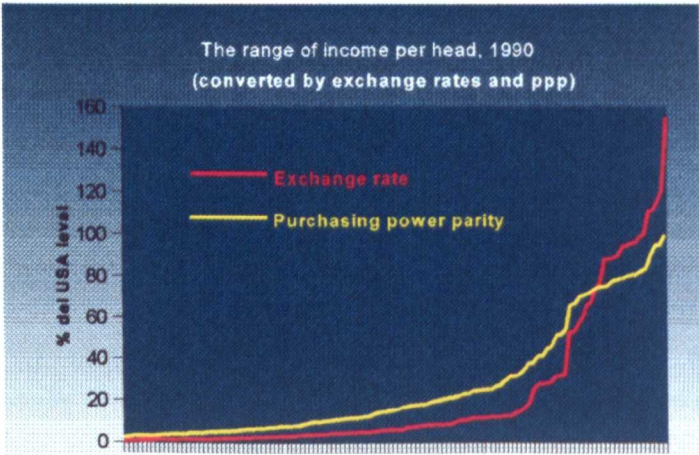
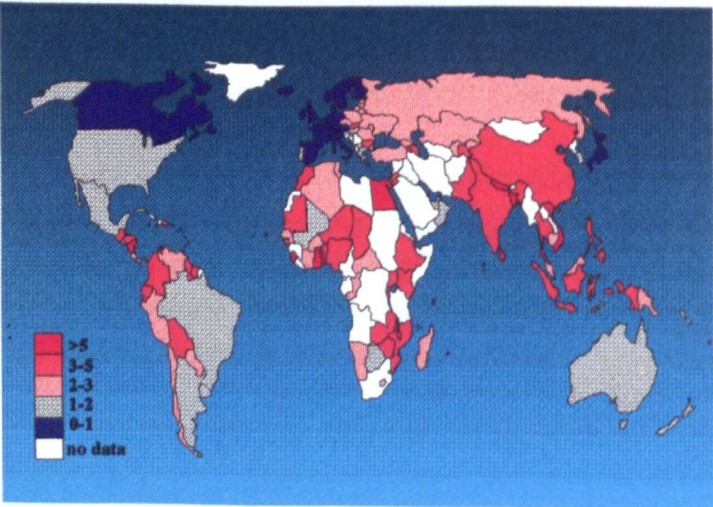


Figure 7: PPP income as a multiple of exchange rate income



Sources: World Bank, *Atlas 1995*

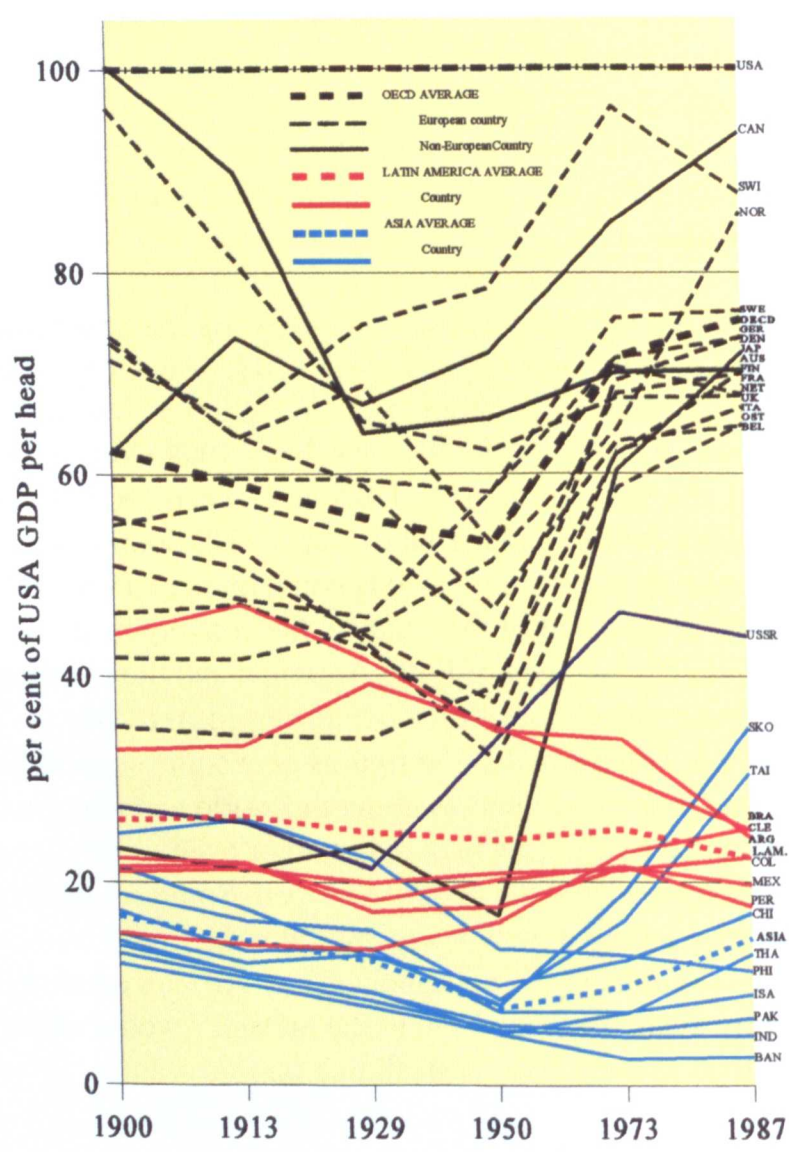
It is not as if statistical inconsistency is unique to ppp figures. And there is some particular appeal to using one source of such figures because they have been processed under the direction of a single experienced economist and, although characterized by extremely daring assumptions, have been produced with a consistent approach. I refer to the data set produced by Angus Maddison<sup>11</sup> which allows comparison between the main macroeconomic series of 36 countries (containing 70 percent of the world's population) over a period of nearly 100 years.

I mention these figures because, assuming they are the best available set of comparative macroeconomic data for the 20th century, then they should in principle have something to say to the issues which are debated in these chapters. Figure 8 shows these Maddison's estimates of GDP per head as a proportion of the USA level since 1900. It tells some very clear stories: the rise and partial decline of US dominance over the century; the sharp rise and simultaneous convergence of the OECD countries in the second half of the century; the convergence and downward relative movement of Latin America; and the relative decline followed by divergence of developing countries in Asia. More controversially, I would say that the figures give some support to dependency and related hypotheses about the world economy, namely that it is dominated by forces which maintain or even widen the gap between the developed and the underdeveloped. Some countries are crossing that gap, but up to now very few and none from Latin America or from Africa (Maddison does not include any African country, but ppp figures recently available from 1950 to the present<sup>12</sup> would show most African countries to be level or declining on this graph.

<sup>11</sup> Angus Maddison, *The World Economy in the Twentieth Century*, Paris: OECD, 1989

<sup>12</sup> University of Pennsylvania International Comparisons Center, Penn World Tables version 5.6, Cambridge, Mass: NBER, computer disk, 1995

Figure 8: GDP per head in international (ppp) \$, 1900-1987, 36 countries



Source: Angus Maddison, *The World Economy in the 20th Century*, Paris: OECD, 1989

## VII

Part of Chapter 5 and almost all of Chapters 9 and 10 are concerned with currents of opinion which question the value of development as it is occurring or even the utility and the possibility of the universal development objective itself. These currents are, of course, very diverse but they tend to lead to conclusions with a considerable overlap.

Chapter 9 and 10 are mostly concerned to find and relate what is positive in the new skeptical, alternative modes of thinking about development, especially from the human development and environmentalist camps. I was, not surprisingly, both excited and intrigued by the arrival of the UNDO's *Human Development Report* and the Human Development Index included in it. This was an officially sanctioned re-examination of the nature and measurement of development and was the outcome of one of the important alternative currents of thought which had been questioning earlier notions of development. For the most part this current was composed of critical social scientists, especially economists, who had not been part of the dependency or marxist critiques of development thinking. Human Development is important because it addresses the utopian concerns about "actually existing development" of many observers (see Chapters 4, 5 and 10), and because it is based on a carefully thought out attempt to reformulate the notion of development, reducing its identification with countries as opposed to the needs of individuals, reducing its identification with particular average income levels and national production structures.

Chapter 9 warmly appreciates the contribution made by the Human Development Index and makes a number of criticisms. Some of these are methodological: for instance the fact that the Human Development Index measured only relative development at an instant

and so cannot to be compared over time. That particular fault has now been rectified but, as my colleagues at the University of the Basque Country show, at the cost of introducing incoherence into the real weightings of the variables making up the index<sup>13</sup>. Many of the criticisms are openly recognized by the HDI's authors and result from the embryonic character which the index retains. And not a few of the criticisms seem to to be the result of the political constraints (presumably United States government pressure) under which the index and report are produced (the evident manipulation of figures to influence the order of countries, the dropping of human rights from the report, and so on).

I regret to note that there are signs that the important new development debate opened up by the appearance of the *Human Development Report*, far from being too polarized, may not to be polarized enough. As the World Bank pays growing lip service to the importance of eliminating poverty, so the *Human Development Report* makes increasingly diplomatic reference to the need to accept structural adjustment and market-friendly policies. Behind this apparent convergence there is, however, a real divergence of approaches which is fundamental to the future of development thinking. It is between seeing development in the first place as the rapid growth of national economic aggregates and seeing it in the first place as an improvement in the real quality of life of those most in need. Those two objectives can sometimes to be realized together but there are many conditions under which they are not. The pressures which affect international organizations suggest that the further development of this promising new line of development thinking will have to to be done outside the official international organizations.

<sup>13</sup> Casilda Lasso de la Vega and Ana Marta Urrutia, 'A proposal on weighting the indicators in the HDI', draft, May 1995

A final criticism made of the *Human Development Report* in Chapter 9 is that it so far dedicated very little attention to one of the other streams of alternative thinking about development of recent years: that of the environmentalist movement. Chapter 10 (which is in part derived from Chapter 8) is, therefore, an attempt to tell the story of development thinking over the last 40 years and to integrate two of the critiques which seem to me to be necessary and original into a meaningful concept of “sustainable human development”. This is a concept which has been used, but not much analyzed, by the UNDP and others. The simple model put forward in the last part of Chapter 10 helps, I believe, to see theoretically how questions such as economic growth, technical progress and redistribution relate to the question of realizing human and sustainable development simultaneously.

I already feel the need to add some cautions to Chapter 10, especially in view of the rapidity with which alternative critiques of development are appearing. In all fields today it is common to see the notion of progress as an ambiguous and difficult one, and even to reject it altogether as an illusion. This aspect of post-modernist thinking is spreading fast in the discussion of development. A glance of the list of new books gives the strong impression that there is almost a school of thinking which it is tempting to call ‘post-developmentalism’. It is seductive, it is partly correct, but in its most undiluted forms it can be dangerous because it promotes the false idea that the human race can somehow sustain itself without the development of technology, industrial production, high productivity and so on, sometimes throwing in the half-truth that it did so in the past much better than it does today. That point does not come out as clearly as I think it could in Chapters 8 and 10. If there were a Chapter 11 it would be about the dangers of this ‘post-developmentalism’. Increasingly that set of tendencies is saying not only that everything that happens is for the worse but also that not even



anything remotely resembling development in the old shared sense could play a even partially positive role. As so often, a good case is in danger of being destroyed by overstatement.